

German-Baltic Business Award 2026

Guidelines

The organizer of the German-Baltic Business Award is Deutsch-Baltische Handelskammer in Estland, Lettland, Litauen e.V., Breite Str. 29, 10178 Berlin, Germany (hereinafter AHK).

This year's award goes to a start-up that is driving innovation in solutions for critical infrastructure, offering products or services designed to enhance the resilience, security, and reliability of essential systems and services. This includes, but is not limited to, technologies for energy, water, transportation, telecommunications, healthcare, and industrial infrastructure, cybersecurity and physical security solutions, monitoring and predictive maintenance systems, resilience and continuity platforms, software-enabled hardware systems and digital solutions that protect, optimize, and modernize critical infrastructure. These guidelines are designed to help your company submit a strong application and ensure transparency throughout the application and the evaluation process.

1. Intention

The aim of the German-Baltic Business Award is to identify the most promising software-driven defense and security innovations in the Baltic States that strengthen the resilience, security, and sustainability of critical infrastructure in the Baltic States. The award evaluates and honors outstanding solutions that enhance the protection, reliability, and continuity of essential services and infrastructure across sectors. Particular focus is placed on start-ups developing innovative solutions for critical infrastructure, including but not limited to cybersecurity for operational technology and industrial control systems, monitoring and predictive maintenance, resilience and continuity platforms, AI-enabled infrastructure management, physical security technologies, software-enabled hardware systems, and digital solutions that protect, optimize, and modernize critical infrastructure.

It also seeks to build strong economic partnerships between the Baltic States and Germany. Start-ups developing technologies with applications across multiple critical infrastructure sectors, including dual-use solutions that enhance both civilian resilience and public safety are especially encouraged to participate.

2. Participants

- 2.1. The German-Baltic Business Award is open to all companies in the Baltic States that work with solutions for critical infrastructure. Private and state-owned companies can apply.
- 2.2. The companies must be located in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania.
- 2.3. The application is without charge or any fee.

3. Application

3.1. The application needs to contain:

- 3.1.1. Company name
- 3.1.2. Contact person, Email, Phone, Website
- 3.1.3. In which sector does your company operate?
- 3.1.4. Company and product description (**Min. 80 - Max. 200 words**)
- 3.1.5. What benefits does your innovative product or service provide to customers and stakeholders? (**Min. 80 - Max. 200 words**)
- 3.1.6. USP of your product/service/solution (**Min. 80 - Max. 200 words**)
- 3.1.7. Clients abroad and export markets
- 3.1.8. Founding year
- 3.1.9. Number of employees
- 3.1.10. Turnover in 2024 and 2025
- 3.1.11. Additional information you would like to add (download link to files)

3.2. Please do not use more than 200 words for each bullet point.

4. Prize

- 4.1. Firstly, three winners will be nominated. The three winners (gold, silver, bronze) can be selected from all participating companies no matter where they are located as the winners are not country-related. Secondly, the winners of this year will be awarded with the title "Critical Infrastructure Innovator of 2026".
- 4.2. The three winners of the German Baltic Business Award will be invited to participate in the 3. German-Baltic Defense Industry Conference in Vilnius. <https://www.bdc2026.com/>
- 4.3. The invitation to Vilnius covers entrance fee and travel expenses for one person per winner company for the journey to Vilnius on the 29th of October 2026 and the return on the 30th of October 2026. It also includes accommodation in a hotel in Vilnius for one night with breakfast.
- 4.4. Another advantage is the great media attention that the three winners of the German Baltic Business Award will receive in Germany and the Baltics, especially through AHK social media channels. In addition, the winners will be published in the business magazine Baltic Business Quarterly, edition Spring 2027.

5. Timeline

- 5.1. From 1st of September 2026 till 2nd of October 2026 is the application phase. Applications which are not submitted on time cannot be considered. Applications will be submitted electronically.
- 5.2. From 5th till 9th of October 2026 the jury will be voting. The jury members receive the application documents and evaluate them using a points system. Explained below (7. Evaluation). Based on the jury's assessments, up to nine finalists will be selected.
- 5.3. On the 12th of October 2026 the nine finalists will be listed online on the website of AHK. From the 12th of October till the 20th of October 2026 online public voting will take place. In this phase everyone can vote for the nine finalists. Be aware that the online public voting will count as one vote next to the jury's votes in the final decision.
- 5.4. On the 21st of October 2026 14:00-16:00 (CET) is the online pitch event. The nine finalists will face the jury's judgment in this online pitch event. Each of the finalists will present themselves and their ideas in a 4-minute online pitch. Afterwards the three winners will be determined by the jury member's ratings and the online vote.
- 5.5. On 29th of October 2026 the three winners will be announced during the German-Baltic Defense Conference in Vilnius.

6. Presentation

The presentation is a 4-minute online pitch via Zoom or MS Teams. Any company member can pitch and the pitch is a requirement. If you do not pitch your company, you cannot be considered. The pitch should provide all the important information about your company.

7. Evaluation

- 7.1. The evaluation is based on the point system and the highest score wins.
- 7.2. The following criteria will be evaluated and are given points for:
 - 7.2.1. Innovation
 - 7.2.2. Market potential and scalability
 - 7.2.3. Strategic contribution to critical infrastructure solutions
 - 7.2.4. IT relevance, impact and real-world applicability
 - 7.2.5. Profitability of the business model
 - 7.2.6. Team: Competence, experience and commitment
 - 7.2.7. Connection to Germany
 - 7.2.8. Idea and quality of the pitch (regarding the nine finalists, final vote)

8. Special Category: Critical Infrastructure Solutions from Ukraine

8.1. Objective and Scope

Parallel to the main Baltic regional rankings, the German-Baltic Business Award 2026 includes a dedicated category specifically for Critical Infrastructure Solutions from Ukraine. This specialized section is designed to discover, evaluate, and honor extraordinary innovations developed under high-pressure conditions that directly enhance the resilience, security, and continuity of essential infrastructure systems.

8.2. Eligibility Criteria

This category is strictly open to start-ups, private tech companies, and enterprises originating from, or actively operating within, Ukraine. Applicants must provide software-driven, hardware-enabled, or dual-use innovations designed to protect, optimize, or modernize essential sectors. This special category will be evaluated according to the same criteria set out in Section 7.

8.3. Dedicated Prize

The selected winner(s) in this category will be invited to participate in the 3rd German-Baltic Defense Industry Conference in Vilnius. The invitation, travel expense coverage, and hotel accommodations will follow the exact same framework and limitations outlined for the main award winners in Section 4.3.

9. Jury

The submitted applications will be evaluated by a jury consisting of 4–6 high-ranking industry experts from Germany and Ukraine, representing private companies as well as investment sectors.

10. General Principles

- 10.1. There is no legal entitlement to participation.
- 10.2. All information provided in the context of the competition has been provided to the best of your knowledge and belief.
- 10.3. Participation is made in good faith.
- 10.4. By participating and attending the German-Baltic Business Award you agree to the AHK Data privacy policy ([Datenschutzerklärung \(ahk-balt.org\)](https://www.ahk-balt.org/Datenschutzerklärung)).